

Empowerment of Digital Literacy for Youth of Karang Taruna Jerukgulung Village, Balerejo District, Madiun Regency Towards a Generation That is Technologically Capable and Wise in Social Media

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this community service program is to improve the digital literacy capacity of the youth of Karang Taruna (Youth Organization) in Jerukgulung Village through the ABCD approach, enabling them to become a technologically savvy and social media-savvy generation. This community service program utilizes an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to empower the youth of Karang Taruna in Jerukgulung Village to become a technologically savvy and social media-savvy generation. Activities included problem identification, asset mapping, formulating shared goals, action planning, technical training, and evaluation and follow-up. As a result, participants were able to manage social media productively, produce positive content based on local culture, and become agents of digital literacy education in the village. This community service program explored local potential, such as individual skills, digital devices, and village culture. Participants formulated a shared dream to make Karang Taruna a pioneer of digital literacy, a producer of positive content, and an agent of healthy social media education. They then designed and implemented programs through technical training, content production, and the launch of an official Instagram account. As a result, participants demonstrated improved digital skills, self-confidence, and a commitment to continue the digital literacy movement independently.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Digital literacy is one of the main benchmarks in assessing how effective the education system and social environment are in shaping critical and creative thinking skills among students (Cynthia & Sihotang, 2023; Farid, 2023; Fitria & Indra, 2021). In the past, students tended to be passive recipients of information; But now, through digital literacy, they are required to be active and wise users in filtering information. The information available is so abundant, but if it is not accompanied by adequate understanding, then users can be easily influenced by hoaxes. Digital technology brings

great benefits, but it also carries a lot of risks (Hutapea et al., 2024; Raza & Komala, 2020). On the one hand, it can increase productivity and social connectivity; On the other hand, its misuse can cause problems, such as the spread of false information that triggers social conflicts. This is often triggered by the low level of digital literacy of the community which causes them to disseminate information without a verification process first.

For youth, especially those who are active in organizations such as Karang Taruna, digital literacy skills are not only important (Mayasari et al., 2025), but also strategic. They not only need to understand the technical use of technology, but also must have critical skills to sort out correct and reliable content amid the rampant hoaxes that are widespread on social media. Digital literacy plays a role in supporting youth to be more involved in social activities, promoting village potential through digital media, and establishing cooperation with other communities (Isabella et al., 2023). This skill allows them to be effective communicators and be able to reach a wider audience.

Not only in the social realm, digital skills also open access to greater economic opportunities. Youth who have these abilities are better prepared to compete in the digital job market, and have the potential to start their own technology-based businesses. Many digital literacy empowerment programs have succeeded in improving the ability of participants to utilize digital media for productive purposes. In the midst of the Society 5.0 era, digital literacy is not only a tool, but a basic need that allows youth to become agents of change in their communities. They are expected not only to be familiar with technology, but also to be able to use it to create a sustainable positive impact. Karang Taruna must take an active role in organizing a structured and sustainable digital literacy empowerment program.

Based on this urgency, this community service activity was carried out to provide digital literacy empowerment to youth in Jeruk Gulung Village, Balerejo District, Madiun Regency. It is hoped that the empowerment participants can develop their digital understanding and skills wisely and productively, as well as play an active role in the development of a technology-based society.

Indonesia is currently facing major challenges in the digital era, especially among the rural young generation who tend to actively use social media but do not have adequate digital literacy (Astuti, 2019). This has led to the widespread spread of *Hoaxes*, *cyberbullying*, and consumption of negative content, as well as low awareness of digital security and media ethics. The inequality of access to information technology empowerment between urban and rural areas also exacerbates this condition, hindering the productive potential of village youth to contribute positively in the digital space.

Various previous community service programs to empower digital literacy for the Sriharjo Village Youth Organization have succeeded in increasing youth participation, understanding, and skills in utilizing digital applications effectively and interactively (Andriyani et al., 2024). The integration of digital literacy with character education is able to strengthen the role of Karang Taruna as an agent of change in building an adaptive, intelligent, and competitive village community in the digital era (Astna et al., 2025). Digital literacy empowerment effectively improves the ability of Prosperous Village residents to recognize and prevent the spread of hoaxes, thereby encouraging a critical attitude in filtering information before it is disseminated (Sukartara et al., 2024).

Initial observations in Jerukgulung Village, Balerejo District, Madiun Regency show that Karang Taruna youth have access to technology such as smartphones and social media, but have not used them productively and educationally. Village potentials such as local culture, community

activities, and micro businesses have not been touched by digital packaging. In addition, there has never been a special empowerment that equips them with digital literacy skills and media ethics in a systematic manner.

There is a gap between the high need for digital literacy at the village community level and an empowerment approach that only focuses on the transfer of technical knowledge without digging into local assets and building community independence. Previous service has not optimally combined digital literacy with participatory approaches based on community assets, such as the ABCD approach, which is considered to be able to build awareness, ownership, and sustainability of programs at the grassroots level. The novelty of this service lies in the application of the ABCD approach in digital literacy empowerment, which places youth as the main actors of change through the use of local assets to create positive and educational content. This approach not only focuses on improving technical skills, but also fosters a sense of ownership, collaboration, and social responsibility towards the digital ecosystem in the village environment.

This service is very relevant to the needs of the young generation in villages who live in the midst of the onslaught of digital information. The significance of this activity lies in its contribution in building digital literacy awareness, improving technology skills, and promoting local cultural values through social media. In addition, this activity also supports the government's efforts to create a smart, productive, and ethical digital society, especially in rural areas. The purpose of this service is to increase the digital literacy capacity of the youth of the Jerukgulung Village Youth Organization through the ABCD approach so that they become a generation that is technologically capable and wise in social media.

2. METHODS

This community service activity carries an approach *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD) (García, 2020; Qiaoyu et al., 2024), which is an empowerment method that focuses on the strengths and potentials of the community, not on its shortcomings. This approach is designed to dig into local assets, build collaboration, and encourage active community participation in creating sustainable change (Najamudin & Al Fajar, 2024; Zunaidi, 2024). In this context, the main target of the activity is the youth of the Jerukgulung Village Youth Organization, Balerejo District, Madiun Regency, with the aim of forming a generation that is capable of technology and wise in social media.

The activity stage begins with situation analysis and problem identification. The service team conducted informal observations and interviews with Karang Taruna administrators, youth leaders, and village officials. It was found that the majority of youth are familiar with social media, but its use has not been directed productively and ethically. In addition, the potential of villages such as local culture, community activities, and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) has not been raised digitally. It was also found that there was limited access to formal empowerment related to digital literacy and cybersecurity. Entering the second stage, namely community asset mapping (*discovery*), facilitators and participants identified assets owned by villages. Individual assets include photography skills, graphic design, and public speaking. Physical assets include ownership of gadgets, internet connections, and multimedia devices. Meanwhile, social and cultural assets can be seen from the Karang Taruna organizational network, the support of village officials, and the wealth of local traditions that can be raised into digital content. This process opens the awareness that villages have valuable resources that can be processed collaboratively.

The next stage is the formulation of a common dream. In the discussion session, the youth formulated three main expectations: to become a pioneer of digital literacy at the village level, to become a producer of positive content based on local culture, and to become an educational agent for the healthy use of social media. This dream is the foundation in designing concrete steps to realize the desired change. The action planning stage (*design*) is carried out collaboratively. Participants are divided into several working groups with different responsibilities. The first group is tasked with creating Karang Taruna's official social media accounts such as Instagram and TikTok. The second group produces educational content and promotes local culture. The third group prepares a follow-up empowerment plan for other members, and the fourth group collaborates with local MSME actors for the digital promotion of products. All planning is carried out in an inclusive atmosphere that encourages a sense of shared ownership.

At the implementation stage (*defined*), participants participated in technical empowerment regarding social media ethics, digital security, and visual content creation techniques. They directly practice taking photos of MSME products, making videos of village activities, and designing infographics. @karangtarunajerukgulung Instagram account was launched, followed by a simulation of digital counseling to residents. Monitoring and evaluation were carried out throughout the activity, through observation of participant involvement, reflection sessions, and assessment of content output. The activity was closed with the preparation of a follow-up plan, such as further empowerment, the formation of a village creative content team, and online assistance by the service team for three months after the activity. The ABCD approach has proven to be effective in awakening local potential and shaping a young generation that is adaptive, creative, and responsible in the digital world.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Results of service

Discovery (Community Asset Discovery)

The initial stage of this digital literacy empowerment activity begins with the process of discovering community assets, which is the basis of the *Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)* approach. The main focus at this stage is to explore and identify the strengths, potentials, and resources that have been possessed by the community, especially the youth who are members of the Jerukgulung Village Youth Organization. Instead of highlighting shortcomings or problems, this approach invites participants to view their village as an asset-rich entity, both physical and non-physical.

Asset mapping activities are carried out through small group discussions, informal interviews, and direct observation of the village's social and cultural environment. The participants seemed enthusiastic about this process because they were given the space to voice their own views and experiences about the forces around them. The results of this mapping are then categorized into several types of assets, namely individual assets, institutional assets, and natural and cultural assets.

First, participants succeeded in identifying individual assets, namely personal expertise and skills possessed by Karang Taruna members. From the results of the discussion, it is known that some young people have abilities in graphic design, video editing, social media management, and some are even experienced in creating content for online product promotion. These skills have great potential to be developed in the context of digital literacy, as they can be the driving force in creating positive and productive content on social media.

Second, various institutional assets were also found that could support the sustainability of activities. The village apparatus, in this case the Village Head and his staff, provide full support for this empowerment, both morally and logistically. Jerukgulung Village Hall is provided as a place to carry out activities, complete with projector facilities, electricity network, and a comfortable space for learning together. In addition, there is a fairly good relationship between Karang Taruna and local schools and village MSME actors, thus opening up opportunities for cooperation in digital empowerment and promotion in the future.

Third, the participants identified various natural and cultural assets that can be used as sources of digital content. Jerukgulung Village is known to have quite good agricultural potential, including agricultural products such as corn, soybeans, and vegetables. Not only that, this village also has cultural riches that are still sustainable, such as Reog art, hadrah, and village salvation traditions. This cultural wealth, according to the participants, is an asset that is not widely known to the general public and can be used as creative content material to introduce the identity of the village to the outside world through social media.

Dream (Building Shared Ideals)

After the participants successfully excavated and mapped the various assets owned by their communities, the activity continued to the second stage in the ABCD approach, namely *Dream* building a shared dream. This stage is a very important moment, because it becomes a bridge between the strength that has been found and the direction to be achieved. This is where the collective spirit, social imagination, and vision of the future of the community begin to be formulated in a participatory manner. The joint dream formulation session was held in a relaxed but enthusiastic atmosphere. The youth of the Jerukgulung Village Youth Organization sat in a large circle, conveying their hopes and ideas to each other for the future of the community, especially in the field of digital literacy and the use of technology. The moderator from the service team facilitated this session with various spark questions, such as: "How do you envision Karang Taruna in the next five years?" or "If you could change one thing in this village with digital power, what would you do?"



Figure 1. Mapping out concepts

From the various conversations and aspirations that emerged, it was clear that the youth had a great passion for change and contribution. They realize that the development of digital technology is inevitable, and when used wisely, it can be a very powerful tool for building villages. In the discussion session that took place after the series of trainings, the participants actively voiced their views and hopes for the role of Karang Taruna in the future. This discussion became a space for

reflection that opened up collective awareness of the importance of youth involvement in building a digital literacy-based community. At least, there are three main expectations that arise from the aspirations of the participants, all of which lead to the transformation of the role of Karang Taruna to be more progressive and have a wide impact in the community.

First, the participants wanted Karang Taruna to appear as a pioneer of digital literacy in the village. This hope was born out of concern about the low digital understanding among the public, especially in vulnerable age groups such as children and the elderly. They dream of Karang Taruna not only as a youth organization that carries out routine or ceremonial activities, but as the front line in educating the public about the use of digital technology in a healthy, safe, and useful manner. In their view, village youth must be present as a bridge of information that reaches community groups that are not yet digitally literate. They want to become facilitators who can help school students understand the internet wisely, assist the elderly in accessing government digital services, and help other citizens to be more capable in recognizing false information.

Second, there was a strong enthusiasm from the participants to make Karang Taruna a producer of positive content about the village. These young people feel that Jerukgulung Village has many local potentials that have been hidden and have not been raised to the public space, such as local wisdom, culture, tourism potential, and community activities. They want Karang Taruna to play an active role in producing creative and inspiring digital content in the form of documentary videos, photos of village activities, and socio-cultural narratives that can build a positive image of their village on social media. By utilizing the digital skills they have acquired during the training, the participants are committed to introducing the new face of Jerukgulung Village to the outside world, in the hope of increasing the community's appreciation and participation in village development.

Third, the participants realized the urgency of the educational role in the digital era, so they hoped that Karang Taruna could become an educational agent for residents in the healthy use of social media. In the midst of the outbreak of the phenomenon of spreading hoaxes, hate speech, and unethical social media practices, the participants were of the view that the solution needed was not just a warning or prohibition, but a sustainable educational approach. They want to be present as informal educators both directly and through digital media that voices the importance of media ethics, personal data protection, and safety in the digital world. This education is expected to be able to form a responsible digital culture, which not only protects individuals, but also strengthens social cohesion in rural communities.

Based on all the ideas gathered, the participants democratically formulated a collective vision that would guide their movement going forward. The vision is "Realizing Jerukgulung Youth who are Capable of Technology and Wise in Social Media through Village Asset Optimization." This vision not only reflects a passion for technological development, but is also firmly rooted in the values of local wisdom and the potential they have identified themselves. This vision was born not from external instruction, but from a deep reflection on what they had and what they wanted in common. The youth of Karang Taruna began to see themselves not only as users of technology, but also as drivers of social change. The dreams they build are not empty dreams, but hopes based on the reality of the assets that are already real in their hands. This stage is an important starting point for real actions in the next stage, namely the planning and implementation of activities based on community strength.

Design

The *Design stage* in the ABCD approach is an important momentum for the participants to translate their shared dreams into real action plans. After going through the process of reflection and identification of community assets, the youth of Karang Taruna began to design an implementation strategy that relied on their internal strengths. This planning process is carried out in a participatory and deliberative manner, where each participant is given space to convey ideas, strategize, and share roles independently. The service team only acts as a facilitator who encourages open discussion, not as an instructor who determines the course of the activity. In an enthusiastic and collaborative atmosphere, participants were divided into several working groups according to their respective interests and abilities. Each group is tasked with preparing concrete steps that will be implemented in the near future, as a form of follow-up to the training.

Group 1 was given the responsibility to create an official social media account of Karang Taruna, namely on the Instagram and TikTok platforms. This group consists of participants who have experience and interest in the field of social media management and graphic design. They immediately develop a visual identity, choose a representative account name, and determine the communication style to be used to suit the character of the village youth. Group 2 is tasked with designing educational content, both with the theme of digital literacy and local cultural promotion. This content is designed to not only educate, but also entertain and evoke pride in village identity. They began to compile a list of topics, visual formats, and delivery styles, such as short videos, infographics, and inspirational quotes from community leaders.

Group 3 focuses on preparing a schedule for further internal empowerment aimed at other Karang Taruna members who have not had time to participate in the first phase of empowerment. They design introductory materials, determine resource persons from within the participants, and arrange the time and place of empowerment to be more flexible and reach more participants. Group 4 took the initiative to collaborate with local MSME actors in Jerukgulung Village. The goal is to help promote local products through digital media that has been managed by Karang Taruna. The group began to collect data on small businesses such as traditional food artisans, local batik, and handicrafts, then designed appropriate digital promotion strategies, such as creating an online catalog or a business profile video.

This planning not only resulted in a to-do list, but also formed a shared commitment among participants to develop villages through the power of community and technology. Each group has a passion for moving and contributing, with the belief that change can start from small steps taken together. This is a tangible manifestation of the ABCD approach that places the community not as the recipient of aid, but as the main agent of change.

Define (Program Implementation)

The *Define stage* is the implementation phase of all plans that have been formulated in a participatory manner by the training participants. After going through the process of asset mapping, dream formulation, and action planning, the youth of the Jerukgulung Village Youth Organization began to realize their ideas in the form of real activities. The implementation of this program is based on the spirit of mutual cooperation and high enthusiasm from the participants, who are now not only beneficiaries, but also main actors in changing the digital community. The first activity carried out was a follow-up technical empowerment that focused on three main materials: social media ethics, digital security, and simple content creation. The material is delivered with a dialogical and practical approach, so that it is easy to understand and can be applied immediately. Participants were invited

to reflect on their personal experiences in social media, understand the importance of maintaining privacy and personal data, and learn to create a positive digital narrative.

After the theory session, the activity continued with hands-on practice of locally-based content creation. In small groups, participants documented various village potentials such as MSME products, traditional activities, and portraits of the daily life of the Jerukgulung community. They made photos of local products, recorded videos of village activities, and compiled educational content around healthy internet use. All the results of this practice are curated together and used as the first social media upload material for Karang Taruna. One of the main achievements of this phase was the publication of the official Instagram account of the Jerukgulung Village Youth Organization, with the username @karangtarunajerukgulung. This account was launched symbolically with the first upload in the form of a village profile and an inspirational message about the spirit of youth building villages through technology. This step was enthusiastically welcomed by the community and the village government, who began to see the great potential of Karang Taruna as a medium for village digital promotion and education.

As part of the service simulation, the participants also carried out a simulation of digital counseling to residents. They made a simple infographic on media ethics, tips for recognizing hoaxes, and guidelines for maintaining the security of digital accounts, then conveyed them in the form of counseling to a small group of villagers. This simulation not only trains participants' communication skills, but also strengthens the function of Karang Taruna as an educational bridge between technology and society. The response from all participants to this program was very positive. They said that this empowerment provided new insights and improved their technical capabilities in creating digital content. In addition, there is an increase in ethical understanding in social media, such as awareness of the importance of filtering information, maintaining digital communication ethics, and building a positive image in cyberspace.

Discussion

Activities Empowerment of Digital Literacy for Youth Youth of Jerukgulung Village, Balerejo District, Madiun Regency Towards a Generation of Technology Proficient and Wise in Social Media clearly reflects the main dimensions in the theory of digital literacy as stated by Paul Gilster (1997). According to Gilster, digital literacy is not just the ability to use technology, but also includes the ability to Understanding Information, evaluate its credibility, Maintaining Digital Security and behave ethically in the digital space (Badriah & Putra, 2025; Syafrial, 2023; Zaenudin et al., 2020). These dimensions are reflected in all stages of program implementation based on the ABCD approach.

In the *Define* stage, the empowerment participants are not only trained to understand the basic concepts of digital technology, but also directed to produce digital content based on local potential. Practical activities such as taking photos of MSME products, videos of traditional activities, and educational content about healthy internet show that participants are beginning to understand how information can be packaged and used strategically to build a positive image of the village. This process is in accordance with Gilster's thinking that digital literacy includes the ability to understand and use information in various forms and from various sources. Empowerment also emphasizes aspects of information evaluation and social media ethics, as seen in material on hoaxes, hate speech, and the spread of incorrect digital information. Participants are invited to not only become consumers of information, but also to be able to recognize, sort, and respond to information critically, which is the core of digital literacy in a cognitive framework. The simulation of counseling to residents through educational infographics showed that participants understood the importance of filtering

information and being responsible in disseminating it as a tangible form of internalizing ethical digital literacy values.

The digital security aspect is also an important part of the training material. Participants were introduced to how to maintain personal privacy, secure social media accounts, and avoid potentially harmful digital pitfalls. This is in line with Gilster's version of digital literacy dimension which emphasizes the importance of personal data protection in the era of information disclosure. This awareness is very relevant for village youth who are starting to actively use digital media more openly and productively. From the social side, this activity also shows the transformation of the role of village youth from just social media users to wise and responsible agents of social change. This can be seen from the expectations of participants in the *Dream* stage, where they expressed their desire for Karang Taruna to become a pioneer of digital literacy, a producer of positive content, and an informal educator in the community. This spirit reflects the shift in the way youth view digital media, from just entertainment to a means of education and community empowerment. In line with Gilster, this proves that digital literacy includes not only technical and cognitive aspects, but also social and ethical dimensions.

The integration of digital literacy theory with the ABCD approach can be seen in how the potential of the community, both in the form of individual skills, institutional support, and local cultural richness, is used as a foundation for digital capacity development. The *discovery* stage shows that the village community actually has important assets that can support the digitalization process, but so far it has not been explored to the maximum. With asset mapping, this potential is actualized through training, and strengthened by a shared vision that emerges at the *dream* stage. All of this forms a locally-based, participatory, and sustainable digital literacy ecosystem.

Based on the data from the service and the framework of Gilster (1997), it can be concluded that the empowerment of digital literacy in Jerukgung Village has succeeded in internalizing the principles of digital literacy comprehensively, including the ability to understand information, assess credibility, maintain digital security, and behave ethically in cyberspace (Naufal, 2021; Roshonah et al., 2021). This activity not only equips participants with technical skills, but also fosters critical awareness and social commitment to use technology as a tool for community empowerment. Thus, the ABCD approach has proven to be effective as a local asset-based digital transformation method that is in line with the essence of digital literacy itself.

The result of this service is that digital literacy service activities for the youth of the Jerukgung Village Youth Organization are carried out with an ABCD approach that focuses on strengthening local potential through active community participation. In the initial stage (*discovery*), the participants and facilitators identified various community assets, ranging from individual skills, digital devices, to cultural and economic potentials that can be raised through social media. Awareness of local wealth is a trigger for the spirit to move forward. The next stage (*dream*) is filled with discussion and formulation of dreams together. The youth hope that Karang Taruna can transform into a pioneer of digital literacy in the village, a producer of positive content about local culture, and a healthy social media education agency. This hope reflects the strong determination of the younger generation to be part of the solution in facing the challenges of the digital world. In the planning (*design*) stage, participants are divided into several working groups to develop concrete steps. They design official social media accounts, create educational content, schedule follow-up enablement, and collaborate with local MSMEs. Planning is carried out collaboratively and openly, so that each participant feels that they have an important role. The implementation stage (*define*) is

carried out through technical empowerment, content creation practices, and the launch of the Instagram account @karangtarunajerukgulung. Participants also conducted a simulation of digital counseling to residents. This activity has a positive impact on increasing digital skills, growing confidence, and the emergence of a collective commitment to continue to develop digital literacy in the village independently and sustainably.

The implications of this digital literacy empowerment activity show that the asset-based approach (ABCD) is able to empower village youth holistically. By exploring the strengths and potentials that already exist in their own environment, the members of Karang Taruna are not only trainees, but also active agents of change. This activity fosters awareness that digital literacy is not just a technical ability, but also a form of social responsibility in building a healthy and productive digital space. The involvement of youth in the planning and implementation of programs proves that they are able to take a strategic role in village development, especially in the field of technology and information. This empowerment also opens up space for cross-sectoral collaboration, such as with MSMEs and village officials, which can strengthen local social and economic networks. The results of this activity have long-term potential in creating a sustainable digital ecosystem in the village. When youth become producers of positive and educational content, they not only raise the image of the village in the public space, but also become role models in the wise use of social media. This implication shows that similar empowerment can be replicated in other villages as a community empowerment strategy based on local wisdom and digital technology.

Conclusion

Digital literacy service activities for the youth of the Jerukgulung Village Youth Organization are carried out with an *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD) approach that emphasizes strengthening local potential. The initial stage (*discovery*) begins with the identification of community assets such as individual skills, digital devices, social support, and local cultural and economic potential. Awareness of these assets arouses the enthusiasm of participants to advance the village through digital literacy. At the *dream stage*, participants formulated a common dream to make Karang Taruna a pioneer of digital literacy, a producer of positive village content, and a healthy social media education agent. This dream became the basis for the *design stage*, where participants were divided into working groups to design official social media, create educational content, organize further empowerment, and establish cooperation with local MSMEs. The *definition* or implementation stage is realized through technical empowerment, content creation practices, the launch of Instagram @karangtarunajerukgulung accounts, and digital education simulations for citizens. As a result, participants showed an increase in digital skills, confidence, and a growing commitment to continue developing the digital literacy movement in the village in a sustainable and independent manner. This program strengthens the position of youth as agents of technology-based change at the community level.

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